# Standard Operating Procedures for Operational Reviews

The following outlines the Foreign Language Program's (FLP) process for conducting operational reviews. Specific questions can be directed to the appropriate Regional Program Manager, the national Program Manager over the relevant language in the Language Services Translation Center, or a Language Quality and Standards Unit (LQSU) national Program Manager.

These Standard Operating Procedures apply to all operational reviews.

## What Is an Operational Review?

An operational review is a check of any material produced by Foreign Language Program personnel, from any source genre, to ensure accuracy, consistency of style and format, as well as clarity and completeness of content.

## When to Conduct Operational Reviews

The following categories of translations must undergo an operational review prior to final release:

All translations from English into the foreign language; [1]
All translations from foreign language into English disseminated as public source material outside the FBI;
All summaries, transcripts and translations being submitted as part of any court proceeding;
All verbatim translations produced by Monitors (as approved by the appropriate national Program Manager in the LSTC).[2]

In addition, supervisors may wish to conduct an operational review in other situations, including the following:

If a large translation assignment has been broken into a series of smaller tasks and assigned to different linguists; or
If a full linguist has no previous experience working in the relevant genre or language dialect/variant.

## Selecting a Reviewer

Try to limit the number of reviewers for any given task. This is especially important for translations being prepared for court, as the AUSA will most often want only one linguist to testify in court.

[1] Translations by linguists assigned to support Legal Attaché offices are exempted from this requirement; however, whenever feasible, these translations should be operationally reviewed before dissemination.
[2] An operationally reviewed translation may not be submitted as a category 4 or 5 quality review.

For a small translation task (1-3 translators) supervisors should generally assign only one reviewer.

For larger tasks requiring multiple reviewers, one reviewer should be chosen to serve as the lead reviewer. The role of the lead reviewer is to ensure consistency of terminology and style across all translations for a specific task, referring and adhering to the MST. The national Program Managers in the LQSU can provide guidance on MST compliance, if necessary. The lead reviewer generally also serves as one of the reviewers.

The reviewer (or lead reviewer for larger tasks) may be a subject matter expert, e.g., a National Language Board member, the lead linguist on the case, the linguist testifying in court, or an experienced linguist (if other team members are relatively new to the FBI).

When selecting a reviewer, supervisors should also consider special requirements such as dialect or subject matter expertise that may be helpful.

The lead reviewers for translations going to court should expect to testify to the accuracy of the translation work that they reviewed and finalized (see Operational Review Process below).

If the FBI does not have a second linguist in a needed language, supervisors must refer the matter to the national Program Manager over the relevant language in the LSTC, who may choose to check for the availability of a linguist outside the Bureau, assign an English proofreader, or waive the Operational Review requirement at his/her discretion.

## Ownership

When preparing documents for court, the reviewer may be the testifying linguist. When this is the case, the reviewer makes the changes and is said to "own" the final product. Reviewer ownership in this case does not remove the communication requirement later outlined in the "Feedback" section.

If the original translator will be the one to testify, the translator maintains "ownership" of the final product and can choose to accept or reject the proposed changes. Translators who are testifying have the last word with regards to the content. They cannot testify to something they do not hear, for example, even if the reviewer hears it. In these instances, the supervisor plays a critical role in ensuring that appropriate changes are made to the document. In cases of extreme controversy, the supervisor may consult with the national Program Manager over the relevant language in the LSTC to recommend an arbiter.

As a general rule, the cover page should contain the names of all those who contributed to a product, either as translators or as reviewers. When materials are to be used in court proceedings, however, the cover page must follow case-specific instructions. An AUSA or case agent may require the names of all contributors, or may prefer to include only the name of the person who prepared the final version. If desired, the supervisor may designate the owner of the product in some manner, for example, by including the words "owner" or "preparer of final version" in parentheses after the name of that individual.

When changes are to be made, the owner should communicate with the other party (translator or reviewer) to discuss *why* the changes are being made.

When the translation is not going to court, the supervisor in the originating office (who requested the operational review) decides who will "own" the document. The national Program Manager over the relevant language in the LSTC can also provide guidance. The owner's supervisor ensures that the finalized version is "clean" of all review comments.

## Operational Review Process

If the document being reviewed is in Microsoft Word the reviewer should turn on the "Track Changes" feature (Review, Track Changes) before making any changes to the original translation. The reviewer may also add comments so all changes are explained or at least shown.

If the document being reviewed is in a format *other* than Microsoft Word, the reviewer should use available features specific to that application to track changes. If the application does *not* have a track-changes capability, the reviewer may cross out the portion to be corrected using Strikethrough or use a different color font and type the correction next to it.

If the reviewer uses Microsoft's "Track Changes" feature, the owner must remember to finalize the document by accepting all changes (Review, Accept, Accept All Changes in Document) before returning the completed product to the supervisor who will return the final document to the customer. The owner should also ensure that all Comment bubbles are deleted and remove the DRAFT watermark. As an added precaution, it is strongly recommended that the owner save the document as a PDF to ensure that no edits are visible to the customer (especially if the document will be turned over to the defense as a part of the discovery process).

The reviewer must check all translations for accuracy, consistency (style, format, and content), and completeness.

### Accuracy

The reviewer must check all Essential Elements of Information (EEI)—who, what, when, where, why, and how—for accuracy. Special attention should be paid to the correct Voice ID of participants in audio recordings.

### Consistency

#### Style

The reviewer must edit the translation to maintain stylistic consistency and register, but should generally accept equivalencies and not spend an inordinate amount of time retranslating passages for style.

#### Format

The reviewer must ensure that the translation conforms to all requirements of the MST. This includes making sure that the appropriate cover page is used and that all relevant information is included. Conventions to indicate the presence of multiple languages (*italics*, underlining, etc.) must be consistent in all transcripts. Personal names must be consistent (spelling, capitalization,

etc.), and the Intelligence Community Standard for Transliteration (ICST) spelling of personal names must appear in a Translator's Note, when applicable.

### Content

The reviewer must also regularize terminology, ensuring that important terms and commonly repeated phrases are translated consistently.

## Completeness

In the case of verbatim transcripts for court, the reviewer must ensure that all background noises and filler words (um, uh-huh, etc.) are transcribed and conform to approved MST conventions. The reviewer should check that no units of information are omitted or added to verbatim translations.

# Managing an Operational Review

Supervisors are responsible for managing all aspects of the operational review process, including task tracking, document management, feedback, proofreading (if applicable), and communicating to all parties to ensure that there is no dispute about who "owns" the final translation.

## Task Tracking

FLP Supervisors create and assign operational reviews in the Language Services Management System (LSMS) like other FLP tasks. The Operational Review (OR) task must be associated with a LSMS Work Request (WR) and should be associated (related) with the translation task(s) under review. Normally, each translation requiring an operational review will have a related OR task.

## Operational Reviews from Single Tasks

**To create the operational review task related to the original translation task:**

- Find and open the translation task to be reviewed and select the "advanced option" drop down menu
- Select "Create Related Task"

The related task will open up and pre-populate the "Case Number", "Priority", "Request ID", originating Info and servicing info. Complete the task information as required:

- Select Operational Review as "Service Type"
- Select the appropriate "Service Sub-Type" (Language)
- Select the "Task Type"
- Set the required "Priority" and "Due Date"
- Enter the subject line information and relevant "Description" Information
- Select the "Data Fields" tab and enter the required information.
- Select "Save"
- Assign the task to the reviewer, or, if the review will be conducted outside the originating

office and/or translation servicing office, re-assign the task to another office through the LSTC PM over the relevant language by changing the servicing office information to the appropriate entity (e.g., Headquarters\TDU-[X] [PM]) and save again.

## Multiple Translations (split) Comprising Single End Product

When assigning an operational review for a split task (i.e., when multiple translations comprise a single request, ultimately resulting in a single end product), it may be necessary to create a single OR task for the entire work for a single reviewer. In this case the originating management group must create the OR task from the Work Request (WR) and document the end product task number (i.e., the task number to be used for the end product cover page).

**To create an OR associated to the WR:**

- Find the work request for the body of work
- Select the “Actions” drop down menu
- Select “Create a Single Task”

The task will open and pre-populate with “Case Number”, “Request ID”, originating and servicing information. Complete the task information as required:

- Select Operational Review as “Service Type”
- Select the appropriate “Service Sub-Type” (Language)
- Select the “Task Type”
- Set the required “Priority” and “Due Date”
- Enter the subject line information and relevant “Description” information
- Select the “Data Fields” tab and enter the required information
- Select “Save”
- Assign the task to the reviewer, or, if the review will be conducted outside the originating office and/or translation servicing office, re-assign the task to another office through the LSTC PM over the relevant language by changing the servicing office information to the appropriate entity (e.g., Headquarters\TDU-[X] [PM]) and save again.

## Document Management

Supervisors must take care to keep track of the various versions of each document. A DRAFT watermark must be added to the original translation and removed once the operational review process has been completed. Throughout the operational review process, the cover page must include current revision date/time information to more easily identify the newest document version, should multiple copies of a document be in circulation. The reviewed document—with track changes—should be saved with a “.or” file name extension to indicate that the document has been subjected to an operational review. Before submitting the final document to the supervisor who will return the completed product to the customer, the linguist should remove the DRAFT watermark, accept all changes, and save this version with a “.final” file name extension.

## Feedback

After proposing changes to the original translation, the reviewer should communicate all changes with the original translator(s), either verbally or in writing. Written feedback can be provided by using "comments" under the Review, Track Changes feature of Word. If the translation being reviewed is not in Microsoft Word format, the reviewer may provide the written feedback in a separate document. It is a best practice for the translator(s) and reviewer(s) to be in communication during the course of the review when there are areas of disagreement or topics that merit discussion, such as regionalisms and/or dialect specific questions. This allows for discussion of terms and further research as necessary.

When appropriate, verbal feedback may be given in the presence of the supervisors from the originating and/or servicing offices (using Microsoft Lync if at a remote site). During such a meeting, the supervisors can: a) set the tone for this feedback session by clearly stating expectations and fostering a professional exchange that supports mentoring and teamwork, and b) observe first-hand the reviewer's and/or the translator's ability to provide/receive mentoring feedback.

## Proofreading

Although a proofreader is not required, the supervisor may elect to appoint a proficient speaker of the target language to proofread the document for grammar, register, and expression. It is preferable to have a proofreader who also understands the source language, but it is not required. If the proofreader encounters an ambiguity it may be necessary to consult with either the translator or the reviewer before deciding how to correct a grammatical or stylistic error.